Global Early Modern Visual Culture
Spring 2022

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Jane Austen and Empire

Antigua and Barbuda

English colonized 1632

By 1674, sugar was the main crop

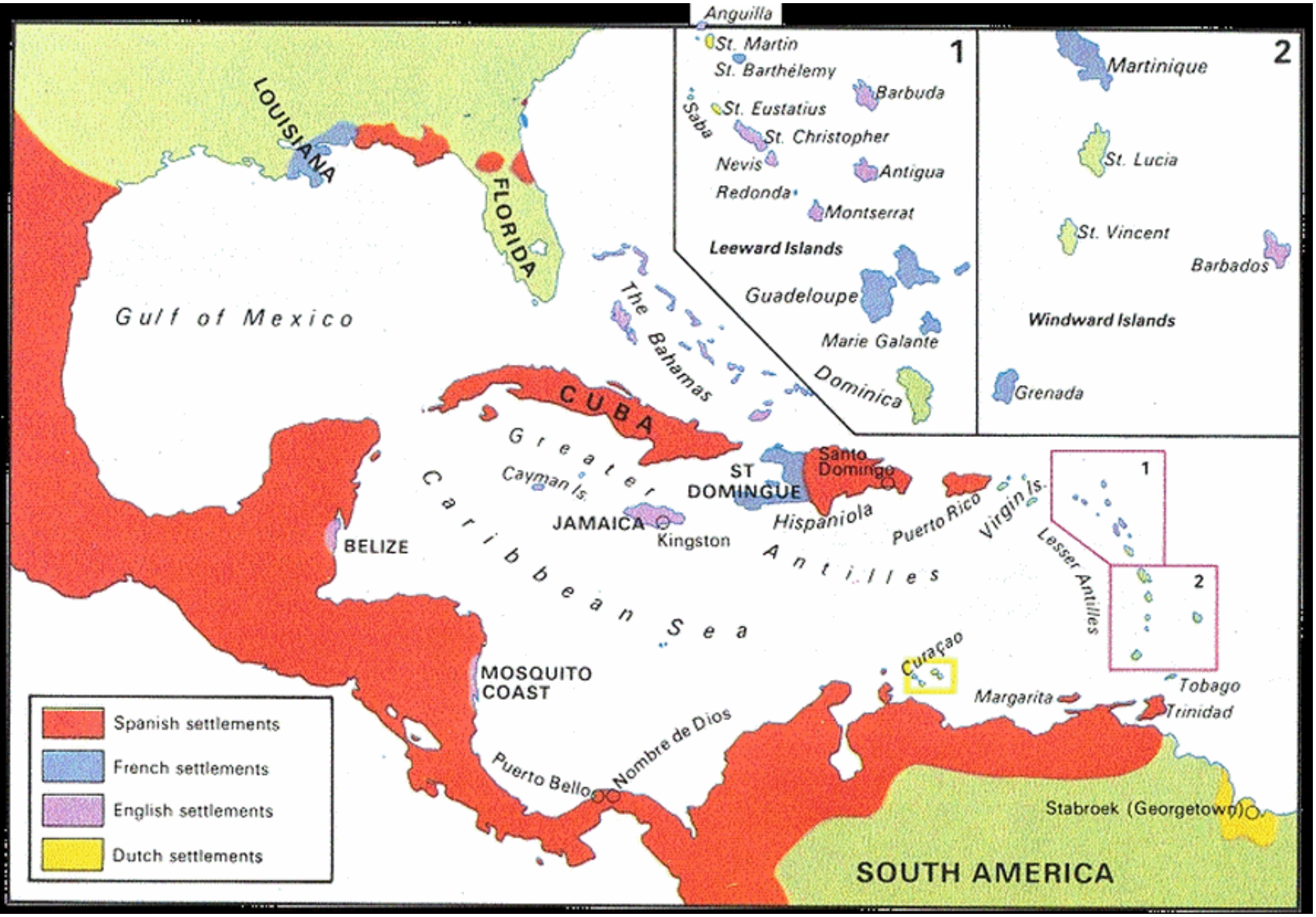
By mid-1770s, there were 37,500 enslaved people of African descent and 3,000 white colonists

Britain bans the slave trade in 1804

Enslaved people in British Empire emancipated 1834

Napoleonic Wars: 1803-1815

Mansfield Park: 1815



John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859)

"The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental or spiritual. Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves, than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest."

"The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right.... The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns him, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign."

John Stuart Mill, *On the Treatment of Barbarous Nations* (1874)
"…nations which are still barbarous have not got beyond the period during which it is likely to be for their benefit that they should be conquered and held in subjection by foreigners. Independence and nationality, so essential to the due growth and development of a people further advanced in improvement, are generally impediments to theirs. The sacred duties which civilized nations owe to the independence and nationality of each other are not binding towards those to whom nationality and independence are either a certain evil, or, at best, a questionable good."

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859)
"It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine [of liberty as a God-given right] is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children, or of young persons below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood. Those who are still in a state to require being taken care of by others, must be protected against their own actions as well as against external injury... **Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians**, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one."

J.C.R. Colomb, 1886